

WILLIAMS LAKE FIELD NATURALISTS

SEPTEMBER + OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

JUNCTION FIELD TRIP Oct 18TH.

They will be out to
look for us again.
Should we head back
and perform for them?



Cattails!
My
Favourite!



Nov 28th 7PM
SALMON
FILM

who gives out
Cattails for
Halloween?



The MUSKRAT EXPRESS

OCTOBER 18, 2025

The newsletter for the:
Williams Lake Field Naturalists
1305A Borland Road, Williams Lake BC, V2G 5K5

Membership fees: Family (\$35), single (\$30) or student (\$10) you must include an additional \$5 if you request a paper copy of the BC Nature magazine. Memberships can be mailed to the above address or emailed to membership@williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca. The membership email address can also be used to e-transfer membership fees. Please complete the membership and waiver forms available at the Nature Centre (250) 398-8532, muskrat@williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca or the web site below. For more information about the club please contact Margaret Waring at (250)398-7724 or e-mail muskrat@williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca

Williams Lake Field Naturalists Website <http://www.williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca>

Scout Island Nature Centre Website <http://www.scoutislandnaturecentre.ca>

Executive of The Williams Lake Field Naturalists: president Margaret Waring, Vice President Sue Hemphill, secretary Nola Daintith, treasurer Ken Day and directors Cathie Hamm, Jeremy Vogt, Jean Oke, Michaela Waterhouse, Kim Zalay, Keith Monroe, Kath VanSpall and Jane Wellburn



Editors: Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter. Please expect your next edition of the newsletter in December. If you stop receiving the newsletter please contact the editors. We always welcome your comments, suggestions, articles and Member's Moments. Please contact Margaret Waring (398-7724), Jim Sims (778 764-2752) or e-mail us at

muskrat@williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca



Nature Preschool
Appreciation Night
Open House

Please join us as we celebrate all those who have helped realize our new Preschool Program

date: **Wednesday 5 Nov 2025** | time: **drop in 4pm-6pm**

Treats & Beverages to enjoy!

Nature Preschool Open House

Hello everyone,

I hope this email finds you staying cozy as we get into the brisk weather.

We would like to extend an invitation to you, hoping you will join us for our Appreciation Night. We are so humbled to have the opportunity to use the Basement Classroom of the Nature House and would like to celebrate with you.

Appreciation Night will be an open house style, so please just pop in when you can to peek around the room, share some treats and allow us to pass along our gratitude.

Please see the attached invitation and we hope that you are able to join us.

Best,

Faren Lozier & Sheilah Olson
Owners of Exploring the Puddle

Salmon and the Fraser River

A program is scheduled for **November 25th at 7 PM at the Nature House**. This is an excellent film about Salmon and the Fraser River. Bev Sellars will attend with her film and join us for a discussion afterwards. Please bring a snack to share and we can have tea and treats after viewing the film that is called "The Spirit Who Swims".

Chocolate

Just a reminder as you should already have the order form. Sue Hemphill is doing a fund-raising chocolate order. Deadline to order your chocolate is October 24th. Contact Sue to purchase chocolate. shemphill@xplornet.com or 250 620-3498

Hands on History

Come join us at Scout Island for this

Free public, family-friendly event

Saturday October 25th 1-3pm

Meet at the Nature House

- Try a sample Archaeological dig
- Get outside! Dress in layers
- Children must be accompanied by an adult



Gooseberry Flats, Churn Creek Field Trip Report

by Peter Opie

On the last day of summer, seven of us took a little trip to Churn Creek Protected Area. Although it was drizzling in town when we met to carpool, it turned out to be a delightful day by the time we got south of Alkali Lake. It takes time to drive deep into Churn and slow for the last couple of kms to Koster Lake. From there following Little Churn Creek, it was a pleasant, level hike for 1.5 hours along a little-used ranch road through forest to the grasslands of Gooseberry Flats. There we stopped for lunch with a marvellous view across Churn Creek to Wycotte Flats, Sheep Flats to Gang Ranch. The rabbit brush was lovely in full bloom. Not much wildlife was seen along the hike; however, on the morning drive we saw a sow bear with three cubs in tow and on the way home we saw a band of bighorn sheep. Overall, a wonderful, even if long day.



The Williams Lake Field Naturalists proudly

presents

The Spirit Who Swims

by Bev Sellars



At **Scout Island Nature Centre**

Doors open at 6:30pm

Film starts 7:00pm

Winner of The Best Canadian Film 2025

56 minutes

An Archaeology Event

From Martin

Free and open to everyone to be held Saturday October 25th 1-3 pm outdoors at Scout Island.

See the attached poster for details.



Notes from the President

By Margaret Waring President

It is quite a while since I have touched base with you, the very important members of our club. The Directors have been meeting once a month, excluding July and August. We often meet on the second Tuesday of the month. We met on May 13th, June 24th, September 16th and most recently on October 14th. Lara Roorda, our new Nature Centre Manager, is very busy and enjoying her new position.

Addy, Timu and Adrien, our three students were an excellent team, who ran a variety of Summer Programs. We employ three secondary school students who feed and care for the critters and who opened the Nature House in August after the University students left and have continued to open it on Saturday afternoons from 12-3. We have had positive feedback from visitors. Martin Kruus our Education Coordinator is busy with fall programs and had an excellent September Salmon Camp for high school students.

Several of our members attended an initial one-day round table gathering, planning for the Williams Lake Creek Valley.

Preschool programs run by Exploring the Puddle Learning Centre started in September. The classes are almost full. They have contributed to the newsletter.

Lara and Director Sue Hemphill have been applying for grants to fund programs and funds for the replacement of Otter Point Bridge. The plan is for the bridge to be built next August. This time is chosen for the least amount of disturbance to the Marsh area. The bridge is currently closed and it is being assessed to see if we can do a temporary fix to make it is safe to use until August.

A new path was built to make it easier to get to the ramp at the front of the Nature House. We thank Lara for her initiation of this and for the grant from Western Financial Group that paid for this and for Skuratow Backhoe for building it. We thank United Concrete who donated some crush gravel for the path and rocks to assist with fire smart work. Topnotch Construction donated 14 new cedar outdoor seats.

We had groups of people coming to help pull weeds and plant trees and so many other things.

We have many wonderful people and businesses donating to support Scout Island. We truly appreciate all the support we receive.

The afternoon of September 26th the BC Chapter of the Wildlife Society had a visit to Scout Island. This was one of the field trips offered at their yearly conference that took place in Williams Lake.

Saturday September 27th BC and Cariboo Tourism Associations hosted a group of journalists from Germany who came for a tour of the Nature House and Scout Island and will return home with videos, pictures and information to share with their organizations.

The membership team of Kim Zalay and Cathie Hamm, is adding new names to our membership list every month and working to make joining and renewals online a more streamlined process. Paper options will also continue to be available!

Ken Day is our Treasurer and with Lara they have been creating budgets and preparing financial statements with our bookkeeper.

We have one final field trip on October 18th with leaders Loyd Csizmadia and Michaela Waterhouse to visit the Junction Sheep Range.

Scout Island has been nominated for a Chamber of Commerce award for Tourism and Hospitality Excellence.

Nola Daintith, as well as being an excellent secretary has obtained a BC Nature grant and is working to improve the web site.

Please continue to keep me informed with your thoughts, suggestions, ideas and questions. Thank you.

Manager's Report & Fundraising Drive Update

From Lara at Scout Island Nature Centre

Hello friends! Lara here—2025 has been a year of growth, learning, and joy at Scout Island. I jumped in just a week before our summer students arrived and spring programs launched into full swing. Now, with the rhythm of fall settling in, things feel a little less hectic—and a little more reflective.

We were lucky to have three fantastic university students join us over the summer, wrapping up their time in August. Meanwhile, three talented high school employees (plus one equally amazing volunteer!) have continued to support our hosting duties and care for the Nature House. It's been a pleasure working alongside them, Martin, and the incredible Field Naturalist team.

Exploring the Puddle Preschool is in full swing, and it's a delight to see the little ones soaking up the outdoors and discovering the magic of the Island. The *Tales and Trails* story-and-walk program had a shorter pause this year thanks to our summer staff, who stepped up to keep the youngest visitors engaged. On October 1st, the wonderful Nyomi returned with a full group of over 20 children and their caregivers—what a lovely start to the season!

Martin and our Nature Educators released the fall program poster in September, and bookings are already rolling in. We're thrilled to continue offering hands-on, outdoor learning experiences that connect people of all ages to the natural world.

As many of you know, community donations are the heartbeat of Scout Island. They help us provide year-round nature mentorship, keep the Nature House vibrant and full of life, and offer meaningful programs for all ages.

We're also working toward a big goal: **replacing the Otter Point Bridge next August**. We're not quite there yet, and every contribution helps us get closer.

How to Donate:

- **By e-transfer:** Log into your online banking and send an Interac e-transfer to **donations@scoutisland.ca**. Be sure to email your **mailing address** if you'd like a charitable receipt.
- **By cheque:** Mail your donation to: *Scout Island Nature Centre 1305 A Borland Rd. Williams Lake, BC V2G 5K5*

Want to donate in someone's name? Email me at **manager@scoutisland.ca** and we'll send you a beautiful card designed by Pat Radolla to gift to your recipient.

Thank you for helping us grow, explore, and connect through nature. Your support means the world!

Fall Into Art!

More from Lara

On Saturday, October 4th, 2025, Scout Island brimmed with creativity as we hosted our very first Fall Art Event—and it was a full house! Thirty enthusiastic participants of all ages gathered for a two-hour outdoor celebration of plants, gratitude, and artistic expression.

We kicked things off with warm introductions and a heartfelt conversation about why plants deserve our daily thanks—especially during harvest season. The spotlight was on the First Peoples' Honorable Harvest Principles, reminding us to take only what we need, give thanks, and use every part of what we gather.

With a wide variety of live and dried plants at the ready, the group collected additional grasses and forbs along the causeway and let their imaginations guide them. From porch planters and festive table pieces to autumn wreaths and painted masterpieces, the creations were as diverse as the artists themselves.

Mother Nature threw in a little drama with a wind-and-rain squall just before we began—and again near the end—but our resilient crew powered through. By the time the second squall hit, most had already wrapped up their earthy masterpieces.

The vibes? Absolutely delightful. The people? Wonderfully grounded. The art? Pure seasonal magic. Many are already counting down to our next eco-friendly adventure: **Earth Friendly Holiday Crafts on December 5th & 6th**. Mark your calendars—it's going to be merry, mindful, and full of handmade joy!



Beginning our Learning Journey

by Faren Lozier

Nature Preschool saw its first day of operation on September 8th, with many eager learners ready to begin their adventures. We've taken our time building relationships with each other, diving into explorations in our classroom and getting well acquainted with Aspen Grove.

Helping some of our more hesitant children feel comfortable is our class mascot - Chip Peanuts. Chip has visited every corner of our classroom and has joined us outside many times. The children have discussed the cones he eats, how he makes a midden, his habitat and built him a cozy nest hidden away in our yard to ensure he has a comfortable place when he joins us outside. He shares all kinds of provocations on his shelf including poems, songs, books and currently, the life cycle of a pumpkin.

As we begin slowly venturing further, our little learners will be getting to know trails, docks and beach. We can't wait to see where their curiosities will take us!

Faren Lozier
Owner & Educator
Exploring the Puddle, Early Learning Centre
279 3rd Avenue N, Williams Lake BC V2G 2A6
PH 250-398-8410



A Tribute to Anna Roberts

By Sage Birchwater with input from friends and family.

We take a moment to remember Anna Roberts, one of the founding members of Scout Island Nature Centre and the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. Anna passed away on Sept. 20, 2025 at the age of 96.

Anna moved to Williams Lake from Ottawa with her veterinarian husband John in 1958. A naturalist friend told Anna to check out the migratory birds of the Cariboo, so Anna encouraged John to head to Williams Lake. While he spoke to the government agent about the need for veterinary services in the region, Anna visited Scout Island at the outflow of the lake.



Both struck gold. John learned there was no veterinary practice north of Kamloops, and Anna recognized the significance of the area for migratory birds and its rich undocumented natural history.

Within a year they built their home on the southeastern shore of the lake where John established his veterinary clinic. Over her 67 years in the region, Anna made her mark. Few people have contributed more to the field of natural sciences, community service and advocacy for nature and conservation.

She has also been a leader and an inspiration as a potter and ceramic artist. She found local sources of clay and minerals for glazes at various locations around the Cariboo, and fired her hand-built creations in her own kiln at her studio next to her home.

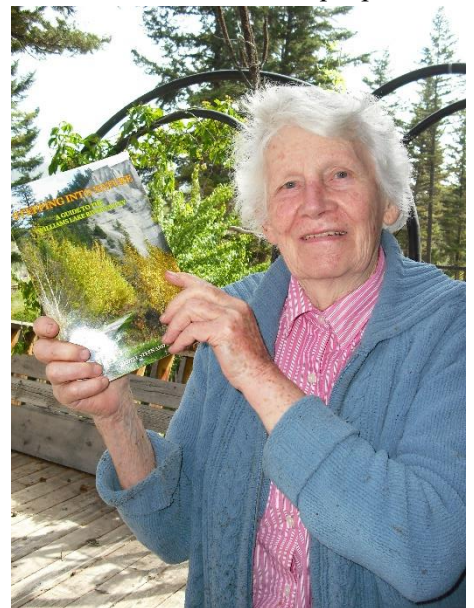
Anna never tired of telling the story of how she put a stop to the city's plans to fill in the Scout Island marsh and use it for commercial purposes. She enlisted the help of R.D. Harris, a biologist for the Canadian Wildlife Service, to assess its potential. His study concluded that Scout Island and the marsh had significant wildlife values and a unique potential for interpreting nature and the wetland ecology within an urban setting.

In 1973 the National Second Century Fund of British Columbia, now known as The Nature Trust of British Columbia, purchased Scout Island from the city for \$99,000 then leased it back to the city for \$1 per year. In 1976 the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, a group of which Anna was a founding member, took over managing Scout Island for the city and the Nature Trust.

Anna's work as a natural scientist extends far beyond Williams Lake. Her work documenting the natural history of the Cariboo Chilcotin can be found in books, reports and publications, and she generously shared her knowledge, photographs and information with others.

Ecologist Ordell Steen, who co-authored several publications with Anna, says "Anna's legacy resides in a lot of people."

Anna continued to live on her own in her Grebe Drive home until suffering a stroke last March in her 96th year. She remains an inspiration to those who knew her best.



Thank-you Anna!

Fred Never Stops Giving to Scout Island

By Sue Hemphill

All of you know Fred's long history of giving to the Field Naturalists and to Scout Island. I found documents he signed in 1979 as President of the WL Field Naturalists and the "managing" of Scout Island by the Field Naturalists began at that time. So much of what Scout Island is today is a result of years of volunteer time by Fred (and many others). Scout Island is the place he asks to come to whenever I have time to book the Handidart and take him down. We had a lively lunch with him in the Nature House library and then went out for a walk at the end of September. I pointed out the new trail sign Lara had made, and he was so pleased that someone else had taken over this long-time task of his.



It is no surprise that when it came time to sell his house and all of the contents in it, he decided that all proceeds from the sale of the contents should go as a donation to Scout Island. It was a very generous donation and has been used to

pay for staff time. Fred knows this is the most difficult cost to raise funding for and requested that it be used that way.

If you have time, stop in and visit Fred at the Seniors Village on Western Ave. He is in the Eagle View wing and always enjoys visitors and a good conversation. If it is a sunny day, take him out in the sun. You can contact me (250 620 3498) if you want more details on how to visit Fred as you can't just call him.